

INFORMATION

FOR THE

Heritors, Elders, &c.

OF THE

PARISH of PEEBLES;

Against

MR. WILLIAM VEATCH.



THE late Mr. *John Hay* Minister of the Gospel at *Peebles*, being by Bodily Pain and Sickness utterly disabled for the publick Exercise of his Ministry, and apprehending the time of his Departure to be approaching; Out of a deep concern for his Flock, after the Example of good and faithful Pastors in all Ages, resolved to look out for a Successor; And for that effect, wrote to the Duke of *Queensberry*, (then undoubted Parron of the Parish of *Peebles*) to nominate some Able and Godly Minister, who might assist him as a Helper during his Life, and to whom he might recommend and leave his Charge at his Death. His Grace being well satisfied with so Pious a desire, remits the choice to himself, whereupon he calls and invites Mr. *Robert Knocks*, one of the Ministers of the City of *Glasgow*, who having accepted the Call, and to the great Comfort of the Pastor and People, served the Cure for sometime: The sick Man had his peaceable Exit in the Lord, solacing himself in this; *That he had not left his Flock as Sheep without a Shepherd*; Immediately after whose Decease, the Heritors, Elders, and Parochioners, did apply

themselves to the Duke's Factor, to Petition the Duke then at *London*, and to acquaint him, that they Unanimously desired Mr. *Robert Knocks* to be their Minister, in place of the deceased Mr. *John Hay*, which accordingly the Duke agreed to, and ordered Mr. *Knox* to continue in the Exercise of his Ministry there. And there, after upon the 17th of *November* 1689, being the Lord's Day after Sermons, the Session being sitting, and the Duke's Letter read unto them, the whole Heritors, Elders, and Parochioners then present, did Unanimously and Cheerfully receive the said Letter and Nomination, and promised to Mr. *Knox* all the Encouragement that could be expected from a Dutiful People; And the Session did order the *Lairds of Haystoun, and Halkshaw, William Plenderleith, John Hope, and John Gevan*, late Provosts of *Peebles*, to wait upon the Duke at his Return, and give him Thanks in all their Names for his care of them. After which time Mr. *Knox* having all the right to be Minister at *Peebles*, which the State of the Church could then admit of, viz. Designation and Appointment of the Patron, with the Consent and Concurrence of the Heritors, Elders,

and by far the greatest and most substantial part of the People, and wanting only the formality of an Induction or Institution, in regard there was no Legal Ecclesiastical Judicatory then in being to confer it on him; continued in the free and peaceable Exercise of his Ministry, until the sixteenth of February 1690, when some violent Interruption being offered unto him by a Company of Unlawful People, as he was coming to the Church on the Lord's Day in the Morning; the Heritors, Elders and People as aforesaid, were so much concerned, that by an express Obligation subscribed under their Hands, they declare their Resolution to adhere to the said Mr. Knox as their Minister; And Commissioned some of their Number to pursue that high Riot, before the Most Honourable Lords of their Majesties Privy Council; Upon whose Complaint and Application, the Lords of Council finding Mr. Knox to have good Right to serve the Cure at the Church of Peebles, did justly punish the Author of the Tumult, and oblige the Magistrates of Peebles, to take such care of the Peace, that there might be no Interruption offered to him for the Future, and thereafter he enjoyed his Ministry comfortably and peaceably, until the Presbytery having as would seem by all their posterior Acts, resolved to Thrust him out and obtrude another on the Parish, did by their Act of the 22nd of July last at Kirkcud, without ever examining his Right and Title, or giving him any Citation, Proceeding upon a false Supposition, as if he had possessed himself wrongously of the Church, required him to forbear Preaching, till he should be allowed by them. The Extract of which Act, being delivered to him by the present Provost of Peebles most unseasonably upon the Lord's Day thereafter, just as he was going to the Pulpit; he taking it as the Act plainly bears, to be only a Temporary restraint, till such time as he should apply himself to the Presbytery for their Allowance, did patiently and pleasantly obey it, taking his seat among the Au-

ditors, while the Provost fetched a Minister from the Meeting-House to Preach in the Church, who after Sermons by an Order (as he said) from the Presbytery, surprized the Parish, by declaring the Church to be vacant, for the supply of which pretended Vacancy, the said Presbytery sent Mr. Robert Eliot one of their own Number, upon the 24th of August being the Lord's Day, to Preach and hold a Meeting for the calling of one Mr. William Veatch; Which Meeting being called after Sermons, the Heritors, either by themselves, or their Proxies, together with all the ordinary Elders of the Parish, and the Generality of the whole People, Compeered and Protested against the calling of Mr. Veatch, appealing from the Presbytery to the next Provincial, or General Assembly that should happen to be, promising to give in the double of their Protestation and Appeal, with the Reasons thereof to the Presbytery the first Day of their Meeting; whereupon they took Instruments. The said Mr. Robert Eliot in a strange and unbrooming Heat and Transport, insolently promising to take Instruments against them in the Name of Jesus Christ, and without any regard to their Protestation, he with his Associates proceeded to Nominate so many pretended Commissioners, to go the next day with Mr. William Russel who was sent by the Presbytery, and in the Name of the Parish of Peebles, to offer a pretended Call to the said Mr. Veatch, among which Commissioners the notorious Villain Beatty, who occasioned the former Tumult, was one, who for his horrid Profanation of the Lord's Day, and villanous Attempt thereupon against Mr. Knox, had been lately and deservedly punished by the Privy Council, to which Call, albeit only signed by Caradonno, who has but small Interest in the Parish, and two or three mean Heritors who have but two Aikers of Ground a piece almost, Mr. Veatch cordially embracing, came and presented it to the Presbytery of Peebles, at and within the Chappel thereof upon the day of September following; The which

which day and place, the Heritors &c. by themselves and their Proxies, compared and gave in their Protestation and Appeal in Writing, with the most grave and weighty reasons thereof, viz. That the Church could not be reputed vacant, Mr. Knox who had beside Possession, a good Right and Title thereto, and to whom they were firmly resolved to adhere, not being either Deposed, or Deprived, but only Inhibited for a time, by the Act of the Presbytery, and his Right not examined, and discussed either by the Presbytery, or any other competent Judicatory; And suppose the Church had been vacant, as it was not; Yet the said pretended Call of Mr. Veatch was ipso facto void and null, in regard of several essential Defects and Informalities of it, such as the Call had not been made in a Regular way by a publick meeting of Heritors, Elders, and Town Council, but by private subscriptions, which the Magistrates of Peebles by menaces and promises had secretly collected from a multitude of Persons legally incapable of any vote in the Election; Some of them having no interest at all in the Parish. That there were none of the Elders consenting therunto, and of a multitude of considerable Heritors in the Parish, only two or three petty and obscure ones consented. All which reasons are more fully exprest in the Appeal, whereupon they took Instruments, but the whole Presbytery (except an Old Grave Man who dissented all along) taking no notice thereof, nor to vouchsafe in the least any Answer thereto, accepted of and sustained the aforesaid pretended Call, exhibited unto them in favour of Mr. Veatch, Ordering an Edict to be serv'd for him the next Lord's Day; which Edict being returned to the Presbytery, upon the 17th of September, and called at the Chappel-labor, compared again the Heritors, Elders, &c. and Declared their Adherence to their former Protestation and Appeal, with the whole Reasons thereof, and subscribing some more pregnant Reasons thereto; viz. That the said Mr. Veatch

was a person utterly unknown to them; and that they ought not to be constrained with an *implicite Faith*, to intrust the care of their Souls to a Man of whom they had no competent knowledge; Yea, that he was a Stranger to the Presbytery it self, and that they had never been at the pains to hear him Preach; that they might judge of his Qualifications for so eminent a place; that the little Tryal the Parish had of him in two or three Sermons, they were in their private Judgement of Discretion not well pleased with his way of Preaching, for several Grave and Weighty Exceptions which they had ready to produce. That for the prospect of a more lucrative place, he had by indirect methods got himself loosed from other Calls, that he might force himself in upon the Parish of Peebles. And finally, that the Presbytery had in many instances behaved themselves very partially in this whole Affair, for all which Reasons more amply enlarged by them at that time, and contained in their Instruments; They did *de novo* Protest and Appeal against any further Procedure of the Presbytery upon the said Edict, giving in a Copy of this their new Appeal, with the Reasons of it, and taking Instruments thereupon, in contempt of which repeated Appeals, with the most irrefragable Reasons thereof; the Presbytery having determined before hand to institute Mr. Veatch; and for that effect engaged Mr. Robert Elliot to Preach at his Institution, proceeded the very next day, being the 18th. of September, actually to institute him, in most Illegal and Disorderly way, contrary to an express Act of the General Assembly, holden at Glasgow, December 17. 1638. Whereby it is expressly provided, That no person be obtruded into any Office in the Kirk, contrary to the will of the Congregation. At which pretended Institution, there were none of the Heritors of any worth, or esteem, nor of the standing Eldership of the Parish, (and excepting the present Magistrates,) none of the substantial Parishioners; Yea, in proportion of the Body of the Parish, few at all

to Accept of or Imbrace him ; in so much that it's informed, Mr. *Elliot* publicly expressed his grief, That there were so few honest Men in the Parish to receive their Pastor.

In Respect of all which, and that the Heritors consenting to Mr. *Veatch* his Call, are but very few, and against several of whom there are Competent and Relevant Exceptions ; viz. That some of them are not Heritors, and others by promise of ease of their Stipends, and some by Threatnings if they did not consent ; And that the Heritors who have protested against the said Call, are not only the most considerable Heritors, and have the most considerable Interest in the Parish, but are double the number of the other, beside the whole Eldership. It is therefore hoped, That his Grace, His Majesty's *High Commissioner* to the Assembly, the Right Reverend Moderator, and the Reverend Brethren of the General Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland now sitting, May Examine, and take into their Grave and Godly Consideration, the whole Progress of this Affair, together with the Parishes Protestations and Appeals, which they Humbly Crave may be publicly Read, hoping by their Pious Wisdom, to have their Lawful Pastor restored unto them ; And in Order thereunto, to be relieved of such an Illegal Intruder, who upon many Accounts has rendered himself unfit to be continued in such a Charge, particularly, because being conscious to himself of the weakness and insufficiency of his Call, partly by his own Solicitations, partly by other indirect Methods, he did influence some few Heritors of Note, to sign it after an Edict had been served thereupon ; Again to shake himself Loose from the Calls, which were Referred to the Synod of *Kells*, he had prevailed with some of his Friends, to Represent his Call to *Peebles*, as the effect of an immediate and Extraordinary Providence, which they did so flourish out in the several Circumstances, that it might appear equivalent to a voice from Heaven,

which he ought not to disobey. Whereas it can be evinc'd, by clear Evidences, That it was a Draught and Design of Men, carried on underhand for a considerable time. And it is left to the Assembly to judge what a gross Hypocrisie and Abuse of the Sacred Name of Providence, it is to pretend an immediate hand of God, to the Cobweb-Plots and Contrivances of sinful Men ; Sure, for as well as this Providence was painted forth to gain this point before the Synod, there were some of that Meeting, who could see thorow the vanity of that Pretence ; And in special, one Grave and Wise Member, could not let it pass without a tart Reflection on it ; Sikelike, upon the day of his Admission, he was not afraid publicly to take God to witness, that no prospect of a great Benefice had induced him to come to *Peebles*, whereas it transcends the comprehensions of the most vast and extensive Charity, to fancy what other motive could prevail with him, to reject Calls of People that were Zealous and Unanimous for him ; and thrust himself in upon a Parish who desired him not, and can expect no Spiritual Comfort from his Ministry. And finally, He has since that time imposed conditions of admitting Children to Baptism in that Parish, which neither the Law of the Land, nor the late General Meeting of this Church has warranted him to do ; whereupon several Persons were necessitate to take their Children to be Baptised by others, and some have taken Instruments against him. And not a few Infants have been in apparent Danger of Dying without Baptism, to the great grief of their Parents ; Among whom were weak Twins belonging to one of the late Magistrates. All which can clearly be proved against him, together with several other Articles which they have to produce, and can prove, competent time being allowed unto them for the Citation of Witnesses, but which they have hitherto forbore to make use of, out of tenderness to his Character, and will always forbear till they be constrained to take this last Remedy.

This

This is the exact Copy of the Information and Petition given in by Mr. *Heriot*, Minister of *Dalkeith*, in Print, to the Privy Council at *Edenburgh*.

INFORMATION

FOR

Mr. *ALEXANDER HERIOT*, Minister at
DALKEITH.

In Relation to the Libel against him, before the Presbytery at Dalkeith, and the Sentences thereon. And Petitions to the Lords of Their MAJESTIES Privy Council.

The Appeal given in by the said Mr. Alexander Heriot to the Synod of Midlothian, containing a short Information of the Progress of that Process, to that time, is as follows.

Moderator, Being conscious of my Innocence, and finding my self Wronged, and Injured, I here appeal from this Synod, to the first General Assembly, when it shall meet; and in the mean time to their *Majesties Protection*, for Justice and Relief; And since the Law allows the Liedges a competent time to give in the Reasons of their appeals, I here Protest within Twenty four hours, to give in the Reasons of this my appeal to your Clerk; And withall, I protest that this be Recorded by him. And upon all I take Instruments.

The Reasons of Appeal of Mr. Alexander Heriot Minister at Dalkeith, from the Synod of Midlothian, to the next Lawful General Assembly, And to their MAJESTIES Protection for Justice, and Relief in the mean time.

THERE being an Indictment given in to the Presbytery of *Dalkeith* against the said Mr. *Alexander Heriot*, and the Libel bearing it to be given in in the Name of the Parochiners, the said

Mr. *Alexander Heriot* and Parochiners compeered, and craved that his accusers might be named to him, and that they might subscribe their Charge against him; And that in regard that the said Heritors and Parochiners did not only *Viva Voce*, but by a Writ under their Hands Disclaim and Disown it, except *Alexander Calderwood*, and a few others, *ex face populi*. And albeit no Libel ought to be admitted without a Pursuer; Yet the Presbytery refused to condescend upon the Ingivers of the Libel, or to ordain them to own and subscribe it. Like as, none had the Confidence to own it, except the said *Alexander Calderwood*, who sat among them as one of the Ruling Elders, and who is notoriously known to be the said Mr. *Alexander Heriot's* declared Enemy (although without cause) and who invented and reported most false Calumnies against him, of which when he was challenged, his answer was, That whether they were true or false, he had thereupon taken two hundred of the Parochiners from his Communion;

munion; Mr. Heriot declined him as Judge in this matter, wherein he both informed and accused; which not only consisted in the knowledge of the Presbytery (who had no other Information but his) but which was likewise offered to be proved by his Oath; yet notwithstanding thereof, against all Law, Reason, and good Order, the Presbytery would not remove him, but allowed him to sit as one of Mr. Heriot's Judges, and appointed him one of the Examinators of the Witnesses: and he forgetting that station, informed and tampered with some of them, and threatened others, as to what they should depone; and the Witnesses being overawed and interrupted in their Examinations, and not allowed to declare the whole Truth in complex matters of Fact, whereby the Depositions may be lame and weak, and carry a quite contrary meaning of the Truth, of what the Witnesses offered to depone; And some of the Witnesses having desired that they might see and read their own Depositions before they subscribed them, the same was absolutely refused, with this Expostulation; *What? do you distrust us? and do you question our Clerk's honesty?* And thus they caused these Witnesses subscribe what was written, so that there may be left out the material parts of their Depositions, which cleared their Minister. And not only are there several Articles of the Libel, which are not upon these Heads, to which the Trial of the Regular Clergy is restricted by Act of Parliament, and which are in themselves *alterius fori*, but likewise there was an additional Libel framed against the said Mr. Alexander, and without any Citation given to him thereupon, or Copy, Sight or Notice given to him thereof; Witnesses are examined, when all whilom there can be nothing in judicial Proceedings more Partial, Perfidious, and Unjust! And Mr. Mounie having appealed from the Presbytery to the General Assembly, the Presbytery notwithstanding thereof proceeded, and found

the Libel Valid, and Proved; and therefore, and in regard of Mr. Herriot's Contumacy (as they termed his Appeal to the General Assembly, which far in October last) they suspended him from the Ministry, and referred him for further Censure to the General Assembly. But the General Assembly having found no Contumacy in the Appeal, they referred him back again to the Synod. And now the said Mr. Alexander does again Appeal from the Synod, and from any Sentence they shall give in this Matter, to the next lawful General Assembly, and in the mean time, to Their Majesties Protection for Justice and Relief. For thir Grounds and Reasons.

First, There being a Petition given in by the Heritors and Parochiniers of *Dalkeith* to the Synod, attesting, the said Mr. *Alexander* his Faithfulness in the Ministry, and his Innocency as to the things Libelled against him; and craving, that according to the Act of *Parliament*, the Depositions of the Witnesses might be made patent, that they might be the better Redargued; yet the Synod offered not the said Petition to be read.

Secondly, The said Mr. Alexander having represented to the Synod the fore-
said Procedure of the Presbytery against
him, and having craved that the Depositions
of the Witnesses, might be read before
him, and that he might have a Copy of
the Additional Libel, which he had never
seen; and that conform to the Act of
Parliament, the Depositions of the Wit-
nesses might be made patent to him; to
the end that he might have a Copy there-
of, to the effect he might the better
clear himself, from any thing that may
seem to be deposed against him; yet
notwithstanding thereof (and contrary
to Law) the same was also refused by the
Synod, and undoubtedly for this Reason,
That the Probation was weak, and might
not abide the Highness Trial, for Veri-
fied as *quarant'night*, or *ni mes*
Thirdly, The said Mr. Alexander repre-
sented to the Synod, that he was inform-
ed the Name of the Libeller, the

ed that one of the Articles deposed against him, was, That he should have danced about a Bonfire the 14th of October 1688; And that the same was the only Article proved against him, which he instantly redargued, for the said 14th day of October 1688 fell upon a Sunday, and that the Witnesses and whole Inhabitants of Dalkeith cannot but declare, that there was never Bonfires at Dalkeith upon a Sunday, so that they deposed flatly. And the Dancing about a Bonfire being so publick an Act, that not only the Witnesses that have deposed it, but likewise many others would have seen it, and all the Inhabitants of Dalkeith would have heard of it, if it had been true: Yet notwithstanding thereof, all the Neighbours to that Bonfire, and whole Inhabitants of Dalkeith will declare and depone, that they neither saw nor heard of their Minister dancing at that, or any other Bonfire; yet notwithstanding of that clear Conviction, and redarguing of that Article, the Synod had no regard thereto, affirming that there was no help for it now, it being so deposed, which is no other thing than as if they had said, that they were not concerned tho' it were false, for it was so deposed; and which is so consequential to a clear and positive Redarguing, and Improbation of the Article, and Probation thereof, that the prejudice and design of the Synod to proceed against the said Mr. Alexander upon whatever was alledged, altho' without Probation, or upon a Redargued Probation, is evidently manifest.

4thly. The said Mr. Alexander represented to the Synod, that he had formerly appealed from the Presbytery, and that it was but too evident from what is above narrated, that they were Party against him. And which was further demonstrate from this, That the said Presbytery and Alexander Calderwood, did in face of the Synod not only interrupt the said Mr. Alexander when he was speaking; but likewise debated and reasoned against him as his opposite Parties, so that it could not be expected, but that they would do

more when he was removed out of the Synod, and therefore the said Mr. Alexander declined the Presbytery, and Alexander Calderwood as his Judges, and craved that they might not sit to judge him; yet notwithstanding thereof, against all Law and Justice, they were not removed.

5thly. Several Members of the Synod interrupted the said Mr. Alexander, while he was vindicating himself, in the face of the Synod, and craving a sight of the Additional Libel, and Deposition of the Witnesses; And cried out, That the same should not be granted to him, as if every one of them had had a Decisive Voice; and which is without Example in any Judicatory, for any of the Judges to interrupt the Defenders speaking, and to cry out their Opinion, or rather Sentence, before the Defender be removed; and which openly discovers their Prejudice, Design and Resolution of proceeding against the said Mr. Alexander, altho' without just cause.

6thly. The Prejudice and design of the Synod's proceeding against the said Mr. Alexander, on the said same, weak, and null probation, is evident, in so far as several Members of their Number did speak and deal with him to demit, or that otherways they would depose him. And there is nothing more certain, than that they would never have Dealt with him to demit, if the Probation against him had been good; Their malice to the Regular Clergy being such, as that they would rather Depose them for Ignominies, and Errors in Doctrine, to expose them, than suffer them to Demit, and get off without stain, when they are guilty of the same. But Mr. Alexander being Conscious of his own Innocency refused to Demit, but rather to suffer their Extremity, from which he hoped GOD in his good time would Vindicate him. And therefore it being evident from the Grounds foresaid, that the Synod has behaved themselves most partially, and against all Law and Form: The said Mr. Alexander does therefore protest

Protest against the Synods further Proceeding in the said Matter, and appeals from them, and from any sentence they shall give therein, to the next lawful *General Assembly*. And to their MAJESTIES Protection, for Justice, and Relief in the mean time; And Protests, That the said Libels, and Witnesses Depositions taken thereupon, may be preserved, and not put out of the way, That so the same (and not Copies thereof) may be produced to the next *General Assembly*; Or to any the *Majesties* shall be pleased, out of their Royal Authority, to appoint to consider the same: And that as the said Mr. *Alexander* will publish and disperse his Appeal, and his Answers to the first Libel; Which he only did see for his own Vindication from any sentence that shall follow hereupon; So he expects, and earnestly Desires, that the said Synod may Print both the Libels against him, and Depositions taken thereupon, for vindication of their Justice, (if they can conceive they have done right:) But which Mr. *Alexander* hopes will rather vindicate his Innocency. And further, Mr. *Alexander* Craves, and Protests, That this his Appeal may be insert in the Books of the Synod.

Notwithstanding of the Appeals foresaid, the Synod proceeded, and Deposed the said Mr. *Alexander* from his Ministry, and thereupon the Eldership of the Parish was invaded, and some few (severals of them scarce worth to be noticed as Residents) have usurped the power of electing Elders, and have elected many more than the number formerly used, purposely as they think, to make the greater Figure; altho' but of the most inconsiderable of the Parish; and of Design to Call, Impose, and Obtrude a Minister upon the Rest against their will, contrary to the Laws of Charity, Practices of Christian Churches, and profession of Presbyterians. Notwithstanding that the said Mr. *Alexander Heriot* his Appeal does in Law preserve his Right, and keeps all in *statu quo*, the time of the Appeal, while it be discuss.

Whereupon, not only the said Mr. *Alexander Heriot*, but likewise the Heritors and Parishioners of *Dalkeith* have given in a Petition to the Lords of their *Majesties* most Honourable Privy Council, That they may be pleased to forbid the Calling of a Minister until the Appeal be discuss; And that in the mean time, he may be restored to the Exercise of his Ministry. And that the Presbytery of *Dalkeith*; And others who had the Libels given in against him, and Depositions of the Witnesses, may make the same known to him, as Law appoints; That he may know what is libelled, or may seem to be proved, to the effect he may the better clear himself of the same, which is nothing but false lies and calumnies: And whereof several of the Presbyterian Ministers, who have seen the Libels and Depositions, Affirm, that there is nothing pretended to be proved, But the dancing about the Bon-Fire; which is not only clearly redargued to be false as said is, there being no Bonfires either on the foresaid day, nor for several months either before or after; But likewise if the persons who have deposed it were known, and re-examined, it will be found, they have deposed falsely; And that they have been dealt with so to Depose; And that this Falshood may not be discovered, nor only are the Depositions kept up, contrary to express Law and Acts of Parliament; But likewise, no notice can be gotten who were the persons who have deposed it, that they may be insisted against.

Whereas it is pretended, That the Lords of their *Majesties* Privy Council, are not Judges competent to the sentences of *Ecclesiastick Courts*, and that as they cannot put in Ministers in Churches, so they cannot meddle with sentences of Depositions. It is answered, That by the 1. Act 8. Parl. Ja. 6. It is Statute and Ordained, That his *Majestie*, and Council shall be Judges competent, To all Persons Spiritual and Temporal, in all matters. And to pretend, that the Council is not Judge competent

competent to sentences of Ecclesiastick Courts, is no other than to affirm, That these Courts have an Arbitrary power, and may do wrong at their pleasure without Remedy or Control. For it is evident, That Mr. Hewitt is most unjustly persecuted and Deposed. And it is also evident, that if it be not Redressed by the Council, he will never be Restored by those Ministers, who have dealt so unjustly with him.

And whereas, it is alleged, That as the Council cannot put in Ministers, so they cannot meddle with sentences of Deposition. It is answered, That the Council has not the power of Admission and Ordination of Ministers. But if a Minister, having a lawful Call, the Presbyterie should refuse to admit and Ordain him, albeit they have nothing to object against him, upon Application to the Council or Session, Letters will be directed to Charge the Presbyterie, to Admit and Ordain him, but *multo magis* in this case, where a Minister is Deposed from his Ministrie, as likewise from his Benefice, (which is his Livelihood and Maintenance) and yet most unjustly, and without Ground or Reason; The Council is most proper Judges, for Restoring him against the foresaid Oppression, Injurie, and Unjust Sentence.

And for a further evidence of this unjust Sentence, it is Humbly desired, that the Lords of Their Majesties Privy Council will be pleased to take notice, That in the first Libel there are many Articles which are not to be admitted in Law; And it is said, that there is none of them proved, but the Dancing about the Bonfire: And yet the Presbyterie by their Sentence, found the Libel Relevant and Proved, which must be understood as to the whole Articles of the Libel complex, than which there is nothing

more false, as will appear by the Libels and Depositions, if they were produced. And yet thereupon Mr. Hewitt is first suspended by the Presbyterie, and referred by them to the General Assembly for further Censure, as if great Immoralities in Life, and Errors in Doctrine, had been proved against him. And the Synod (to which the Assembly remitted him) following the steps of the Presbyterie, deposed him. Now when Presbyterie and Synod, have acted thus contrary to express Law, and have done open and manifest Unjustice; (and whereof all that heard of it are convinced and sensible) And having started themselves Parties against him, there can be no Remedy expected from the said Unjustice, Injury, and Oppression, unless the Lords of Their Majesties Privy Council interpose their Authority.

If it be alleged, That the late Act of Parliament, The Act of Supremacy in Church matters is Repealed; It is answered, That the Act of Parliament 1669 is Rescinded, which extended the Supremacy, to the Ordering and Disposal of the External Government and Policy of the Church, and to the Enacting of Constitutions, Acts, and Orders in the Church. But the foresaid Act of K. Ja. 6. his 8 Parliament, is not Rescinded, which is only as to the Judging of Ecclesiastick Persons in matters complained upon; and which power is inherent in the Crown, otherways there should be *Regnum in Regno*; and Church Judicatories should have arbitrary Power, without Redress or Control, as said is.

In Regard whereof, The Lords of Their MAJESTIES Privy Council are Judges Competent, to this Injurie, Unjustice and Oppression; And the Desire of the Petitions ought to be Granted.

*ACT of the General Assembly, anent a Solemn National Fast
and Humiliation, with the Causes thereof.*

At Edinburgh, November 12. 1690. *Postmeridien, Sess. 25.*

THE General Assembly, Having taken into their most serious Consideration, the late great and general Defection of this Church and Kingdom, have thought fit to Appoint a Day of Solemn Humiliation and Fasting, for Confession of Sins, and making Supplication to our Gracious God, to forgive and remove the guilt thereof: In order whereunto, they have Ordained the Confession of Sins, and Causes of Fasting following, to be duly Intimated and Published; Recommending it most earnestly to all persons, both Ministers and others, That every one of us may not only search and try our own hearts and ways, and stir up our selves to seek the Lord; But also in our Stations, and as we have access, Deal with one another, in all love and tenderness, to prepare for so great and necessary a Duty, that we may find mercy in God's sight, and He may be graciously reconciled to our Land in our Lord Jesus, and take delight to dwell among us.

Although our gracious God hath of late, for his own Names sake, wrought great and wonderful things, for *Britain and Ireland*, and for this Church and Nation in particular; Yet the Inhabitants thereof have cause to remember their own evil ways, and to loath themselves in their own sight for their Iniquities.

Alas! We, and our Fathers, our Princes, our Pastors, and People of all Ranks have sinned, and have been under great Transgression to this day: For though our gracious God shewed early kindness to this Land, in sending the Gospel amongst us, and afterward in our Reformation from Popish Superstition and Idolatry; and it had the Honour, beyond many Nations, of being after our

first Reformation, solemnly devoted unto God, both Prince and People, yet we have dealt treacherously with the Lord, and been unstedfast in his Covenant, and have not walked suitably to our Mercies received from him, nor obligations to him: Through the mercy of God this Church had attained to a great purity of Doctrine, Worship, and Government, but this was not accompanied with suitable personal Reformation, neither was our Fruit answerable to the pains taken on us by Word and Work; We had much Gospel-preaching, but too little Gospel-practice; too many went on in open wickedness, and some had but a form of Godliness, denying the power thereof; many also who had the Grace of God in truth fell from their first love, and fell under sad languishings and decays; and when for our sins the anger of the Lord had divided us, and we were brought under the feet of strangers, and many of our Brethren killed, others taken Captive and sold as slaves, yet we sinned still, and after we were freed from the yoke of strangers, instead of returning to the Lord, and being led to Repentance by his goodness, the Land made open Defection from the good ways of the Lord: many behaved as if they had been delivered to work abomination, the flood-gates of Impiety were opened, and a deluge of wickedness did over-spread the Land. Who can without grief and shame remember the shameful debauchery and drunkenness that then was? And this accompanied with horrid and hellish cursing and swearing, and followed with frequent Filchiness, Adulteries, and other Abominations, and the Reprover was hated, and he that departed from Iniquity made himself a reproach or prey.

prey. And when by these, and such like corrupt practices, mens Consciences were debauched, they proceeded to sacrifice the Interest of the Lord Jesus Christ, and Priviledges of his Church to the lusts and will of men; The Supremacy was advanced in such a way, and to such an height, as never any Christian Church acknowledged; the Government of the Church was altered, and Prelacy (which hath been always grievous to this Nation) introduced, without the Churches consent, and contrair to the standing Acts of our National Assemblies, both which the present Parliament hath (blessed be God) lately found; And yet nevertheless, of the then standing Ministry of Scotland, many did suddenly and readily comply with that alteration of the Government, some out of Pride and Covetousness or Man-pleasing, some through infirmity or weakness, or fear of Man, and want of Courage and Zeal for God; many faithful Ministers were thereupon cast out, and many Insufficient and Scandalous men thrust in on their Charges, and many Families ruined, because they would not own them as their Pastors.

And alas! It is undeniable, there hath been under the late Prelacie, a great decay of Piety, so that it was enough to make a man be nicknam'd a Phanatick, if he did not run to the same excess of riot with others.

And should it not be lamented, for it cannot be denyed, there hath been in some a dreadful Atheistical Boldness against God, some have disputed the Being of God, and his Providence, the Divine Authority of the Scriptures, the Life to come, and Immortality of the Soul, yea and scoffed at these things.

There hath been also an horrid Prophanation of the Holy and Dreadful Name of God, by Cursing and Swearing: Ah! there hath been so much Swearing and Forswearing amongst us, that no Nation under Heaven have been more guilty in this than we; some by swearing rashly or ignorantly, some falsely, by breaking their Oaths, and imposing and taking

ungodly and unlawful Oaths and Bonds whereby the Consciences of many have been polluted and seared, and many ruined and oppressed for refusing and not taking them.

There hath also been a great neglect of the Worship of God, too much in publick, but especially in Families, and in secret.

The wonted care of Religious sanctifying the Lord's Day is gone, and in many places the Sabbath hath been, and is shamefully prophaned.

The Land also hath been full of bloody Crimes, and Cities full of Violence, and much innocent Blood shed, so that Blood touched Blood; yea, Sodoms sins have abounded amongst us, Pride, fullness of Bread, Idleness, Vanities of Apparell, and shameful sensuality filled the Land.

And, alas! how great hath been the Cry of Oppression, and Unrighteousness, Iniquity hath been established by a Law, there hath been a great perverting of Justice, by making and executing unrighteous Statutes and Acts, and sad persecutions of many for their Conscience towards God.

It is also matter of Lamentation, that under this great Defection there hath been too general a fainting, not only amongst professors of the Gospel, but also amongst Ministers; yea, even amongst such, who in the main things did endeavour to maintain their Integrity, in not giving seasonable and necessary Testimony against the Defections and Evils of the Time, and keeping a due distance from them, and some on the other hand managed their Zeal with too little Discretion and Meekness.

It is also matter of Humiliation, that when Differences fell out amongst these, who did owne Truth, and bear witness against the Course of Defection, they were not managed with due Charity and Love, but with too much heat and bitterness, injurious Reflections used against pious and worthy men on all hands, and scandalous Divisions occasioned, and the success of the Gospel greatly obstructed thereby,

thereby, and some dangerous Principles drunk in: And after all this, there were shameful advances towards Popery, the Abomination of the Mass was set up in many places, and Popish Schools erected, and severals fell to Idolatry.

And though the Lord hath put a stop to the Course of Defection, and of his great mercy given us some reviving from our Bondage; yet we have sad cause to regrave and bemoan, that few have a due sense of our mercy, or walk answerable thereto, few are turned to the Lord in truth, but the wicked go on to do wickedly, and there is found amongst us to this day shameful ingratitude for our mercies, Horrid impenitency under our sins, yea, even amongst those who stand most up for the Defence of the Truth: and amongst many in our Armies, there is woful Prophaneness and Debauchery. And though we profess to acknowledge, there can be no pardon of Sins, no Peace and Reconciliation with God, but by the Blood of Jesus Christ; yet few know Him, or see the Necessity and Excellency of the Knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; few see their need of Him, or esteem, desire, or receive Him, as he is offered in the Gospel; few are acquainted with Faith in Jesus Christ, and living by Faith on Him, as made of the Father unto us, Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption; and few walk as becometh the Gospel, and imitate our Holy Lord in Humility, Meekness, Self-denial, Heavenly-mindedness, Zeal for GOD, and Charity towards Men: But as there is even until now, a great contempt of the Gospel, a great Barrenness under it; so a deep Security under our Sin and Danger, a great want of Piety towards God, and Love towards Men, with a woful Selfishness, every one seeking their own things, few the things of Christ, or the publick Good, or one anothers welfare: And finally, the most part more ready to censure the sins of others, than to repent of their own.

Our Iniquities are increased over our heads, and our Transgressions are grown up

into the Heavens, they are many in number, and hainous in their nature, and grievously aggravated, as having been contrair to great Light and Love, under signal Mercies and Judgments, after Confession and Supplication, and notwithstanding of our Profession, Promises and Solemn Vowing, and Covenanting with God to the contrair.

Have we not then sad cause of deep Sorrow and Humiliation? And may we not fear, if we do not repent, and turn from the evil of our ways, and return to the Lord with all our hearts, that He return to do us evil, after he hath done us good, and be angry with us, until He hath consumed us?

Let us therefore humble our selves by Fasting and Praying, let us search out our sins, and consider our ways, and confess these, and other our sins, with Sorrow and Detestation; Let us turn unto the Lord with Fasting and weeping, and with mourning; Let us firmly Resolve and sincerely Engage to amend our ways and doings, and return unto the Lord our God, with all our heart, and earnestly pray, that for the blood of the Lamb of God, our sins may be forgiven, and our back-slidings healed, and we may yet become a righteous Nation, keeping the Truth, that Religion and Righteousness may flourish, and Love, and Charity abound, and all the Lord's People may be of one mind in the Lord: and in order to all these, that the Word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, and that the Preaching of the Word, and Dispensing of the Sacraments, may be accompanied with the wonted presence, Power and Blessing of the Spirit of the Lord; That the Lord would preserve and bless our gracious King and Queen, William and Mary, and establish their Throne by Righteousness and Religion, and grant to these Nations, Peace and Truth together; and for that End, bless and prosper His Majesties Councils, and Forces by Sea and Land, and those of the Princes and States his Allies, for God and his Truth, that Inferior Rulers may rule

rule in the fear of God, and Judges be clothed with Righteousness, and that many faithful Labourers may be sent out into the Lord's Vineyard, and they who are sent, may find mercy to be faithful, and be blest with Success, that Families may be as little Churches of Christ, and that the Lord would pour out His Spirit on all Ranks of People, that they may be holy in all manner of Conversation, and God may delight to dwell amongst us, and to do us good.

And while we pray for our selves, let us not forget our Brethren in Forreign Churches, with whom, alas! we had too little Sympathy; Nay, let us pray, that all the ends of the Earth, may see the Salvation of God; and that He would bring his antient people of the *Jews* to the acknowledgment of Jesus Christ; and that he would hasten the ruine of Romish Babylon, and advance the Reformation in Christendome, and preserve and bless the Reformed Churches; That he would pity His oppressed People, the *French Protestants*, and gather them out of all places, whither they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day; and that he would be the Defence, Strength and Salvation of any of his People, who are in War or Danger by Infidel or Popish adversaries, in *Europe* or *America*. And in particular, that the Lord would be Gracious to *Ireland*, and sanctifie to his People there, both their distress and deliverance; and perfect what concerneth them, that he would convert the Natives there to the Truth, and re-

duce that Land to Peace; and appoint Salvation for Walls and Bulwarks to *Brittain*.

For all these Causes and Reasons, The General Assembly hath appointed the Second Thursday of *January* next, to be Observed in all the Congregations of the Church and Nation, as a day of Solemn Fasting and Humiliation, and Prayer; Beseeching and Obtesting all, both Pastors, and People of all Ranks to be sincere and serious, in Humiliation and Supplication, and universal Reformation, as they would wish to find mercy of the Lord, and have deserved wrath averted, and would obtain the Blessing of the Lord upon themselves and Posterity after them; and that the Lord may delight in us, and our Land may be as Married to him. And Ordains all Ministers, either in Kirks or Meeting houses, to read this present Act publickly from the Pulpit, a Sabbath or two before the said Day of Humiliation: and that the several Presbyteries take care, that it be carefully Observed in their respective bounds. And where, in regard of Vacancies, the Day hereby appointed, cannot be observed, the Assembly appoints the said Humiliation, to be kept some other Day with the first convenient opportunity: And appoints the Commission for Visitation, to apply to the Council, for their Civil Sanction to the Observation thereof. *Extracted out of the Records of Assembly, by*

JO. SPAEDING. Cls. Syn. National.

A PROCLAMA-

A PROCLAMATION

Anent a Solemn National Fast and Humiliation.

WILLIAM and MARY,
by the Grace of God, King
and Queen of Great Britain,
France, and Ireland, De-
fenders of the Faith; To

Macers of our Privy Council,
or Messengers at Arms, our Sheriffs in that
part, Conjunctly and severally, specially con-
stitute, Greeting: Forasmuch, as the Gene-
ral Assembly of this Church, by their Act,
of the date the twelfth day of November
instant, hath appointed a Solemn National
Fast and Humiliation, to be Observed in all
the Kirks and Meeting-Houses of this Our
Antient Kingdom; and appointed their Com-
mission for Visitation, to apply to the Lords of
Our Privy Council, for Our Civil Sanction,
to be interposed thereto; And they having
Applied accordingly: Therefore We, with
Advice of the Lords of our Privy Council, Do
hereby Command and Enjoyn, That the said
Solemn Fast and Humiliation be Religiously
observed, by all Persons throughout this
Kingdom, both in Kirks and Meeting-Houses,
at the Dyets, and in the manner as by the
above-mentioned Act of Assembly, hereto pre-
fixed, is appointed; And that the same be
read by all the Ministers, in manner therein
mentioned. And to the end that so Pious and
necessary a Duty may be punctually performed,
and Our Pleasure in the Premises fully
known: Our Will is herefore, and We Charge
you straitly, and Command, that incontinent

these Our Letters seen, ye pass to the Mer-
cat-Cross of Edinburgh, and the remanent
Mercat-Crosses of the Head-Burghs of the
several Shires and Stewartries, within this
Kingdom, and in Our Name and Authority,
make Publication of the Premises, that none
may pretend ignorance. And we do Ordain
Our Solicitor to dispatch Copies hereof to
the Sheriffs of the several Shires and Stew-
arts of the Stewartries, or their Deputs, or
Clerks, to be by them Published at the Mer-
cat-Crosses of the Head-Burghs, upon re-
ceipt thereof, and immediately sent to the
several Ministers, both in Kirks and Meet-
ing-Houses, to the effect they may read and
intimat the same from their Pulpits, and
may seriously exhort all Persons, to a sincere
and devout observance thereof, as they Re-
gard the Favour and Blessings of the Al-
mighty God, the Safety and Preservation of
both Church and State, and would avoid
the Wrath of God upon themselves and their
Posterity, and as they will be answerable at
their peril. And Ordains these Presents to
be Printed with the said Act of Assembly,
and these Presents to be Published in man-
ner foresaid.

Given under Our Signet at Edinburgh,
the twenty first day of November.
And of Our Reign, the second
year, 1690.

Per actum Dominorum Sti. Concilii.
GILB. ELIOT, Cls. Sti. Concilii.

God save King WILLIAM, and Queen MARY.

Edinburgh, Printed by the Heir of *Andrew Anderson*, Printer to the
King and Queens most Excellent Majesties. 1690.

F I N I S.